

920-926 F Street, NW (Commercial Buildings)
(Schwartz Building)
Washington, Columbia
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-569-B

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DC,
WASH,

585-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SCHWARTZ BUILDING

922-924 F STREET, NW

HABS No. DC-569-B
926 F STREET, NW

Location: 920 F Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C.
USGS Washington West, DC-MD-VA
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
324.365/4307.075/18

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Significance: The Schwartz Building at 920 F Street, NW was designed in 1911 by local architect Samuel R. Turner, and is a significant example of the Federal Revival style popular in Washington commercial architecture at the beginning of the 20th century. The building illustrates the traditional building patterns associated with the late-19th and early-20th century commercial district in Washington. Designed with retail space on the ground level and offices above, the building continues to present the mercantile image of the turn-of-the-century downtown.

Description: Four stories tall, this brick building features a three-story, pressed metal, octagonal oriel that encompasses two-thirds of the facade. A cast iron cornice with dentil trim surmounts the oriel. The remaining third has a single double-hung window at each level, all of equal size and in line with the street level entrance serving the upper floors. Each of these windows is one-over-one and has a rather heavy keystone lintel and a twelve light transom above. The oriel has one large window flanked by two smaller ones surmounted by a transom at each floor. The building's parapet rises above a cast iron cornice with dentil detailing. The street level is marked by show windows flanking a central door.

History: Prior to the construction of the Schwartz Building, the offices of Albert F. Fox, a prominent real estate and insurance agent, were located at 920 F Street. In 1911, the Schwartz Building was designed for the site by Samuel R. Turner for Benjamin Schwartz. The building housed Schwartz's tailor shop on the ground floor and various independent offices on the upper floors until the 1920s when it received major alterations to accommodate its conversion to hotel use under the name of the New Commercial. It changed to the Lakes Commercial Hotel in 1929, and in 1934 became the Ritz Hotel. The street level of the building currently is used for retail space and the upper floors are vacated.

Location: 922-924 F Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C.
USGS Washington West, DC-MD-VA
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
324.365/4307.075/18

Significance: The structure illustrates the traditional building patterns associated with the late-19th and early-20th century commercial district in Washington. Designed in c. 1876 with retail space on the ground level and offices above, the building continues to present the mercantile image of the turn-of-the-century downtown. The building is significant as an example of the Second Empire style popular in Washington in the 1870s and 1880s.

Description: The three-story building features a pressed brick facade and cast-iron cornice below the mansard roof of the attic story, characteristic of the Second Empire style popular in Washington at the time. The fenestration is dominated by the two show windows on the ground floor that have been altered at least seven times. Two dormers, each having two narrow windows, double-hung, two-over-two units, punctuate the mansard roof. The facade is divided into four bays with the double-hung, two-over-two windows evenly spaced. The interior of the first floor has a pressed metal ceiling with a floral pattern and accompanying cornice.

History: Based on tax assessment information, it appears that the building was constructed in 1876. Designed for commercial use on the ground floor, the building was occupied by the Evans Dining Room from 1879 to 1897, followed by the Evans Drug Store from 1901 to 1910. In 1912, the single retail space at street level was altered to accommodate two separate stores. The street level continues to accommodate two retail spaces, while the upper floors are vacated.

Location: 926 F Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C.
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Significance: The building at 926 F Street, NW was designed in 1891 by noted local architect Leon Dessez, who also worked on plans for the Washington Monument and designed Rock Creek Hospital and the Soldiers' Home Hospital in Washington, D.C. The building on F Street was commissioned by the law firm of Wolf and Cohen, noted for their expertise representing fire insurance companies. The structure illustrates the traditional building patterns associated with the late 19th century commercial district in Washington. Designed with retail space on the ground level and offices above, it continues to present the mercantile image of the turn-of-the-century downtown.

Description: This three-story building features a pressed brick facade with brick lintels and brackets, and a corbelled brick cornice. The interior features a pressed metal ceiling of a floral pattern with accompanying cornice, a dumb-waiter and two fireplaces with wood mantels, firebox screens and hearth tiles. In 1909 the tenant contracted architects Hunter and Bell to remodel the structure, including lowering the first level and adding an elaborate storefront, since removed.

History: The firm of Wolf & Cohen practiced law at this address from 1891 to 1904. Desio Salvatore ran a jewelry store at this address between 1914 and 1934. In 1939, the herald of a new age and industry, the Star Radio Company opened its doors. In 1909 significant alterations were done to the building including the excavation of the cellar to accommodate a new heating plant, installation of a new vault and show windows, and the addition of a new building in the rear of the property. The street level of the building is currently used for retail space and the upper floors are vacated.

Sources: Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

Historian: Laura Harris/Elizabeth Jiranek
Traceries, 702 H Street, NW Washington, DC
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